

the lead of so-called Independent Counsel Ken Starr, and utterly failed to develop any facts of its own that would bear on the allegations. The Committee made a mockery of the responsibilities that come with consideration of impeachment and debased the Constitutional criteria by which impeachment is justified.

From the outset, I opposed the process pursued by the Committee. As members of the Committee noted, the majority proceeded from allegations to a conclusion, ignoring fact-finding or rational inquiry. In short, the process was unfair. By denying the House the opportunity to vote on censure, and by introducing raw partisanship into a vote of conscience, the majority has compounded that unfairness. Attempts to inflict the maximum amount of pain on the President by insisting on impeachment—the ultimate “scarlet letter” as Mr. McCOLLUM put it—risks putting this country through an experience it need not endure. In view of the strong reasons not to impeach, and the strong public sentiments against such action, the partisan march toward impeachment is truly regretful.

HINDU NATIONALISTS DESTROY CHRISTIAN CHURCHES IN “SECULAR” INDIA

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I was disturbed by recent reports that several Christian churches, prayer halls, and religious missions have recently been destroyed by Hindu extremists affiliated with the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), a militant Hindu organization. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the party that leads the governing coalition, is also part of the VHP.

The violence forced many Christian congregations to cancel New Year's celebrations for fear of offending the Hindu militants, which could lead to further violence. Is this the secularism that India boasts about? Clearly, there is no religious freedom for these Christians in India.

Unfortunately, these are just the latest incidents of violence against Christians in India. Four nuns were raped last year by a Hindu gang. The VHP described the rapists as “patriotic youth” and called the nuns “antinational elements.” To be Christian in secular India is to be an antinational element! At least three priests were killed in 1997 and 1998, and in 1997 police opened fire on a Christian festival that was promoting the theme “Jesus is the Answer.”

Apparently, the Hindu Nationalists are afraid that the Dalits, or “Untouchables”, the aboriginal people of South Asia who are at the bottom of the caste structure, are switching to other religions, primarily Christianity, thus improving their status. This undermines the caste structure which is the foundation of the Hindu social structure.

The Indian government has killed more than 200,000 Christians since 1947 and the Christians of Nagaland, in the eastern part of India, are involved in one of 17 freedom movements

within India's borders. But the Christians are not the only ones oppressed for their religion.

India has murdered more than 250,000 Sikhs since 1984 and over 60,000 Muslims in Kashmir since 1988, as well as many thousands of other people. The holiest shrine in the Sikh religion, the Golden Temple in Amritsar, is still under occupation by plainclothes police, some 14 years after India's brutal military attack on the Golden Temple. The previous Jathedar of the Akal Takht, Gurdev Singh Kaunke, was killed in police custody by being torn in half. The police disposed of his body. He had been tortured before the Indian government decided to kill him.

The Babri mosque, the most sacred Muslim shrine in the state of Uttar Pradesh, was destroyed by the Hindu militants who advocate building a Hindu temple on the site. Yet India proudly boasts that it is a religiously tolerant, secular democracy.

This kind of religious oppression does not deserve American support. We should take tough measures to ensure that India learns to respect basic human rights. All U.S. aid to India should be cut off and we should openly declare U.S. support for self-determination for all the peoples of the subcontinent. By these measures we can help bring religious freedom and basic human rights to Christians, Sikhs, Muslims, and everyone else in South Asia.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce Press reports on the attacks on Christian religious institutions into the RECORD.

[From the Washington Post, Jan. 3, 1999]

HINDUS BLAMED FOR ATTACKS ON CHRISTIANS

NEW DELHI.—India's main opposition Congress party said a wave of attacks on Christians appeared to be a campaign by Hindu right-wing groups to whip up conflict.

Police detained 45 Hindus Friday in connection with torching a Catholic prayer hall by mobs Wednesday. Four nuns and two priests were injured in the 10th reported attack against Christians since Christmas.

No one has claimed responsibility for the attacks in the western state of Gujarat, but Congress and Christian activists blame Hindu right-wing activists, including the Vishwa Hindu Parishad—World Hindu Council—and its affiliate, Bajrang Dal. Christians make up 2.3 percent of the 960 million people in politically secular India. More than 80 percent of the population are Hindus.

[From the Washington Post, Dec. 31, 1998]

INDIAN CHRISTIANS CANCEL NEW YEAR SERVICES

MULCHAND, INDIA.—Christian congregations in western India are canceling New Year prayer services this year, fearful of provoking more violence from radical Hindus who already have destroyed a dozen churches. The violence has put the governing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the awkward position of needing to protect India's Christian minority from groups affiliated with the Hindu nationalist party. Since Friday, mobs armed with axes, iron bars, hammers and stones have attacked 18 churches, prayer halls or Christian schools.

GENETIC INFORMATION NON- DISCRIMINATION IN HEALTH IN- SURANCE ACT OF 1999

HON. LOUISE McINTOSH SLAUGHTER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to introduce today H.R. 306, the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination in Health Insurance Act of 1999.

Over the past few years, genetic discoveries have proceeded at a pace undreamt of less than a decade ago. Genes have been identified that are linked to common disorders like colon cancer, heart disease, and breast cancer. Doctors and researchers are moving rapidly to develop gene therapies and specialized drugs that attack only cells carrying damaged DNA.

A tiny sample of blood, tissue, or hair can now reveal the most intimate secrets of an individual's present and future health. While this information holds tremendous promise for curing disease and alleviating human suffering, it also carries an equal potential for abuse.

As a result, I am reintroducing the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination in Health Insurance Act. This vital legislation would prevent health insurers from denying, canceling, refusing to renew, or changing the terms, premiums, or conditions of coverage on the basis of genetic information. It would prohibit insurance companies from requesting or requiring that a person reveal genetic information. Finally, it would protect the privacy of genetic information by requiring that an insurer obtain prior, written consent from an individual before revealing his or her genetic information to a third party.

Since it was first introduced in 1995, support for my legislation has grown steadily. At the end of the 105th Congress, the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination in Health Insurance Act had 210 bipartisan cosponsors in the House and 25 in the Senate. It had also gained the endorsement of over 125 health-related organizations, ranging from advocacy groups like the National Breast Cancer Coalition and the March of Dimes to health professional organizations like the American Medical Association and the American Nurses Association. Religious organizations, health information managers, and consumer protection groups joined the fight.

In May 1998, the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee under Chairman JIM JEFFORDS held a groundbreaking hearing on genetic discrimination in health insurance. Unfortunately, efforts to move this legislation to the Senate floor became bogged down in the debate over managed care reform. Nevertheless, genetic nondiscrimination language was included in some versions of managed care reform legislation—an important step toward recognizing the urgent need to ban genetic discrimination in health insurance.

Mr. Speaker, I am very hopeful that 1999 will be the year when Congress finally fulfills its duty to ensure that our nation's social policy keeps pace with scientific advances. Today, too many Americans are denying themselves access to information vital to their

health—their genetic information—simply because they are afraid their insurers will learn this information and use it against them.

We must put an end to this unconscionable Hobson's choice. Congress should ban genetic discrimination in health insurance. I look forward to working with Members from both parties to protect all of our constituents against this practice. The American people deserve no less.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE 1999 CONGRESS-BUNDESTAG/BUNDESRAT STAFF EXCHANGE

HON. RALPH REGULA

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mr. REGULA. Mr. Speaker, since 1983, the U.S. Congress and the German legislature have conducted an annual exchange program for staff members from both countries. The program gives professional staff the opportunity to observe and learn about each other's political institutions and convey Members' views on issues of mutual concern.

A staff delegation from the United States Congress will be selected to visit Germany May 22 to June 5 of this year. During the 2-week exchange, the delegation will attend meetings with Bundestag members, Bundestag party staff members, and representatives of numerous political, business, academic, and media agencies. Cultural activities and a weekend visit in a Bundestag Member's district will complete the schedule.

A comparable delegation of German staff members will visit the United States for 3 weeks this summer. They will attend similar meetings here in Washington and visit the districts of Congressional Members.

The Congress-Bundestag exchange is highly regarded in Germany and is one of several exchange programs sponsored by public and private institutions in the United States and Germany to foster better understanding of the politics and policies of both countries. The ongoing situation in the Persian Gulf, the expansion of NATO, the proposed expansion of the European Union, and the introduction of the Euro will make this year's exchange particularly relevant.

The U.S. delegation should consist of experienced and accomplished Hill staff members who can contribute to the success of the exchange on both sides of the Atlantic. The Bundestag sends senior staff professionals to the United States.

Applicants should have a demonstrable interest in events in Europe. Applicants need not be working in the field of foreign affairs, although such a background can be helpful. The composite U.S. delegation should exhibit a range of expertise in issues of mutual concern in Germany and the United States such as, but not limited to, trade, security, the environment, immigration, economic development, health care, and other social policy issues.

In addition, U.S. participants are expected to help plan and implement the program for the Bundestag staff members when they visit the United States. Participants are expected to as-

sist in planning topical meetings in Washington, and are encouraged to host one or two Bundestag staffers in their Member's district in July, or to arrange for such a visit to another Member's district.

Participants will be selected by a committee composed of U.S. Information Agency personnel and past participants of the exchange.

Senators and Representatives who would like a member of their staff to apply for participation in this year's program should direct them to submit a resume and cover letter in which they state why they believe they are qualified and some assurances of their ability to participate during the time stated. Applications may be sent to Connie Veillette at 2309 Rayburn Building by noon on Friday, March 12.

STATEMENT BY ALBANIAN AMERICAN CIVIC LEAGUE REGARDING SITUATION IN KOSOVO

HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to call the attention of the members of Congress to the following statement by the Albanian American Civil League regarding the current situation in Kosovo. It represents the views of a significant number of Albanian Americans, and I believe is of interest in view of the deteriorating situation in Kosovo:

STATEMENT BY THE ALBANIAN AMERICAN CIVIC LEAGUE

INDEPENDENCE FOR KOSOVO IS THE ONLY WAY TO STOP MILOSEVIC'S WAR

Recent events in Kosovo only confirm the Albanian American Civil League's prior assessment that the Milosevic-Holbrooke agreement is a death sentence for the Albanian people of Kosovo. How many mistakes and tragedies must the Albanian people bear before the United States realizes that it is being exploited by Slobodan Milosevic as a convenient tool of Slavic expansionism, at the expense of the Albanian people?

The first major mistake occurred in 1990, when Secretary of State James Baker gave Slobodan Milosevic the green light to consolidate his power by stating that the goal of the United States was to keep Yugoslavia together at all costs. Milosevic responded by waging war first in Slovenia in 1990, then in Croatia in 1991, and finally in Bosnia in 1992. (His brutal military occupation of Kosovo in 1989 continues unabated to this day.) In 1995, Richard Holbrooke authored the Dayton Accords, in which a fault-ridden peace was declared in Bosnia after negotiations that excluded the third largest ethnic group in the former Yugoslavia—the Albanians. Then, in February 1998, U.S. Special Envoy to Kosovo Robert Gelbard mistakenly declared the Kosovo Liberation Army a "terrorist" group, giving Milosevic the signal he needed to openly wage a one-sided war against the Albanian people of Kosovo. This led to massacres of unarmed and defenseless civilians in Drenice and Dukagjin, leaving over 2,000 dead, 1,000 missing, and 300,000 displaced.

In September 1998, in response to the public outcries around the world about the brutality of the Serbian military campaign against a civilian population, the United

States promoted the threat of air strikes against Serbia. But, true to form, Holbrooke crafted an agreement that enabled Milosevic to avert the use of force against him and at every step accepted more of his false promises. One must ask why our State Department is allowing a chauvinistic and dictatorial pan-Slavic Orthodox regime, with direct links to ultranationalists in Russia, to emerge in the Balkans?

The so-called cease-fire of recent weeks never really took place. The Serbs began to move their troops out of Kosovo in October, but then they moved right back. Albanians insist that the brutal and criminal Serbian paramilitary forces staged the killing of six Serbian civilians in Peja this month in order to justify the continuation of Milosevic's ethnic cleansing in Kosovo. (The Kosovo Liberation Army was quick to condemn the killings of the Serbian civilians.)

The events in Podujeva on December 24, in which the Serbian military attacked five villages, killed twelve Albanian civilians, and caused the flight of thousands of others leave no question about Milosevic's real intentions to continue the "ethnic cleansing" of the Albanian majority of Kosovo. The Western response to these events also leaves no question about our role in the Balkan conflict—that we never had any intention of stopping Milosevic from using illegal and inhuman methods to destroy the right of Albanians to freedom, democracy, and self-determination.

For the past three weeks, our policy makers and the press have once again attempted to create a false parity between the Serbian military and the Kosovo Liberation Army, and to cast blame on the KLA for breaking the so-called cease-fire. They have promoted Serbia's false statements to the press, including listing names of people supposedly arrested and imprisoned by the KLA but who, according to reliable Albanian sources, do not even exist. Meanwhile 2,000 Albanians are being held and brutally tortured in barbaric Serbian jails. And while this information goes unreported, unconfirmed reports of atrocities committed by the KLA against innocent Serbs living in Kosovo are publicized widely, even though the KLA has repeatedly stated its policy against killing civilians.

As the misrepresentation of the conflict continues apace, so do the "diplomatic" initiatives designed to sell out the Albanian people of Kosovo. The French government for example, has been working behind the scenes to persuade Ibrahim Rugova, the leader of the Democratic League of Kosovo, to believe that he can find a solution to the Balkan conflict with Milosevic. Following a recent trip to France, Rugova made a public statement that Milosevic "was elected by the Serbian people in a legitimate way," and that he is the "only legitimate person" with whom he can negotiate. More astonishing still, Rugova stated that institutions in Kosovo that he controls "would do the utmost to persuade the UCK extremists to stop their provocations and attacks on Serbian security forces." Incredibly, this is tantamount to Rugova giving another green light to Milosevic to continue his reign of terror and murder against the Albanian people of Kosovo. Are we to assume that some forces inside LDK are being supported by the West to try to eliminate the KLA, and that they are willing to do so in order to retain their political control of Kosovo under any circumstances?

There has been great concern among Western diplomats that war has broken out again in Kosovo, well before the spring thaw. But, it should now be clear to all that as long as